



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

September 8, 2005

News Release

8 INDICTED IN CONSPIRACY TO ISSUE TEXAS DRIVER'S LICENSES TO ILLEGAL ALIENS

DALLAS — The Aug. 24 grand jury indictments on eight people were unsealed today on various counts related to their operation of a conspiracy to issue Texas driver's licenses and Texas personal identification cards to illegal aliens, announced U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper, Northern District of Texas, following an investigation by: the Texas Rangers, the FBI and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Four of the eight defendants were arrested today by Texas Rangers, and agents from the FBI and ICE. Kelenia Flores Romero and Maria Villanueva appeared before the Honorable Jeff Kaplan, U.S. Magistrate Judge, for their initial appearance this afternoon. Flores Romero is being detained pending a detention hearing set for Sept. 12; Villanueva was released on bond. Defendants Marco Antonio Rabanal and Rosa Maria Romero will make their initial appearance before a Magistrate Judge at a later date. Defendant Gerardo Ruiz Garcia is in custody in an unrelated federal case in Laredo; and the three remaining defendants are expected to surrender within the week.

The following eight defendants all from Texas are charged in the 11-count indictment:

- David Julio Callirgos, 50, of Garland
- Marco Antonio Rabanal, 48, of Garland
- Rosa Maria Romero, aka "Rosa Rabanal" and "Sherry," 47, of Garland
- Kelenia Flores Romero, 36, of Lancaster
- Gerardo Ruiz Garcia, 35, of Lancaster
- Maria Villanueva, 33, of Irving
- Julia Garcia, 30, of Cedar Hill
- Claudia Garcia Salinas, 29, of Cedar Hill

The indictment charges each of the eight defendants with one count of Conspiracy to Transfer Unlawfully Issued Identification Documents which carries a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine upon conviction. Each of the defendants is also charged with five counts of Mail Fraud - Deprivation of Intangible Right of Honest Services, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine per count, upon conviction. Kelenia Flores Romero, Gerardo Ruiz Garcia, and Julia Garcia are also each charged with three counts of Unlawful Transfer of an Identification Document, which carries a maximum penalty of 15 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine per count upon conviction. Maria Villanueva is charged with two counts of that offense and Claudia Garcia Salinas is charged with one count of that offense. Restitution could also be ordered. In addition, the indictment includes a forfeiture allegation that upon conviction, any personal property used to commit the offenses will be subject to forfeiture to the United States.

According to the indictment, beginning in 1999 and continuing through March 2004, the defendants conspired with each other and others to knowingly cause the transfer of Texas driver's licenses and Texas personal identification cards, knowing that the documents were produced unlawfully. The defendants would receive between \$300 and \$1200 from individuals who wanted a Texas driver's license and/or Texas personal identification card, but who could not produce a valid means of identification. In addition, Julia Garcia and Claudia Garcia Salinas, who were employees of the Texas Department of Public Safety Driver License Division, solicited and accepted bribes from defendants David Julio Callirgos, Marco Antonio Rabanal, Rosa Maria Romero, Kelenia Flores Romero, Gerardo Ruiz Garcia, Maria Villanueva and others in return for breaching their fiduciary duty to the State of Texas by unlawfully approving applications of individuals referred by the other defendants.

David Julio Callirgos, Marco Antonio Rabanal, Kelenia Flores Romero and Maria Villanueva would locate through referrals from intermediaries, individuals who wanted to obtain driver's licenses and personal identification cards issued by the State of Texas, but who could not do so legitimately. They would independently — and/or through defendants Rosa Mara Romero and Gerardo Ruiz Garcia, acting as middlemen — collect the fees from the applicants, obtain and complete the applications, transport the applicants to the Texas Department of Public Safety Driver License Division offices, direct applicants to clerks in their employ, alert the clerks by telephone that the arrival of an applicant was imminent, provide a description of the applicant to the clerk and vice-versa, and pay the cash bribes to the clerks.

Julia Garcia and Claudia Garcia Salinas, who are no longer employed by the Department of Public Safety, approved the applications referred to them, checked Texas Department of Public Safety criminal history databases to ensure that the name being used by the applicant was clear, that is, not the subject of any arrest warrants, altered names that were not clear, falsified applications by showing that a particular means of identification was used when no such means of identification was or could be produced by the applicant, and altered test scores on the applicants' driving knowledge tests. Julia Garcia and Claudia Garcia Salinas informed the other defendants when it was safe to send in applicants for processing without the risk of raising the suspicions of the Texas Department of Public Safety's Driver License Division management. The defendants directed many applicants to first obtain a state personal identification card through them and later use that identification card to obtain a Texas driver's license.

U.S. Attorney Roper especially recognized the investigative efforts of the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Rangers, the FBI and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

An indictment is an accusation by a federal grand jury and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. Assistant U.S. Attorney Joseph M. Revesz is prosecuting the case.

#ICE#

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.